

# STEERING COMMITTEE RETREAT '05

## BOLT Core Values and the Program

- Issues:
  - What is it supposed to be vs. what it really is
  - What applies to leaders vs. participants?
  - Is the purpose to get as many people out in the wilderness? Or more in depth in terms of leadership?
  - **Language:** tension between “leader” and “participant,” “leader-of-the-day” and “participant”  
These terms are confusing for the participant – Why is the participant supposed to lead when there is a clearly defined leader on the trip? Etc. How do we change these terms to be more conducive with our stance on different styles of leadership and everyone’s capabilities to be a leader during the trip?
  - How do we sell bolt as an outdoor experience vs. meeting new people?
  - People need to understand the structure of BOLT... to what degree do we want BOLT to be an open, undefined program? What are the benefits of having people take what they want from the program?
- Observations:
  - The weight of the program is in Spring leader training
  - Going into the trip, objectives aren’t that clear... as the trip goes on, it becomes clear
  - Most people think of BOLT as teambuilding, group dynamics
  - Most people think of BOLT as a mere 5 day camping trip
- Strive to emphasize environmental ethics, history and info about the White Mountains

## BOLT and Leadership as a Core Value

- Themes in our concepts of Leadership
  - Confidence
  - Different types of leadership
  - Self awareness
  - Group-first mentality
  - Challenge your ideas
  - Shared experience, part of leadership is being part of a group
  - NSEW
  - Appreciating/working with different leadership styles
  - Leadership is inevitable, an active group member is a leader
- Perhaps introducing other theories of leadership in addition to NSEW
- Ways to make Leadership more apparent:
  - Having an additional training devoted solely to leadership and how to make it a part of the trip
  - Having mini-retreats and workshops on leadership (open to everyone)
  - Post-trip leadership facilitation is key to making the trip more than just a group experience
  - Be up front in the beginning about: what is bolt? how does it overlap with your personal goals? Does leadership factor in at all?
  - Pre-trip and post-trip exercise about the meaning of leadership (writing letters, facilitated discussions, etc.)

## Improving Training

### Diversity

- Issues:

- How do you foster conversations about diversity to take place? (we know how to facilitate them, but how do you get them to start in the first place?)
- How do you seize the moment to create more discussion?
- How do you create a safe space on your trip? Make people comfortable without fear of being unPC?
- Is the camping trip an appropriate forum for such discussions to take place?
- Observations:
  - Diversity of values came up more on the trip than issues about ethnic diversity (ex. Playing “Never have I ever” often alienates those who do not drink, have sex, or other taboo things)
  - There is a social component to the trip, a social diversity within the group that must be handled: some form clicks within the group, others feel alienated
- Suggestions:
  - The definition of diversity needs to be expanded in terms of ability, values, social roles, etc. when leaders are being trained
  - Leaders need to be comfortable themselves about these issues so that they feel comfortable talking to the participants about diversity, they have to be the model
  - Everyday issues within your group often provide opportunities to discuss diversity
  - Training needs to provide leaders with a greater understanding of how to have these discussions
  - Leaders need to show that it’s okay to be vulnerable, be the first to share stories
  - Have leaders have these discussions! Then they can figure out what worked, what didn’t, and then take that into their trip

### Group Facilitation

- Critique of last year’s training:
  - Large group discussions weren’t as valuable as the small group discussions (fishbowl vs. small)
  - Time at the beginning and end where we sat in a big group and asked vague questions like, “why is group facilitation useful?” aren’t as effective as other methods used to help people start thinking about the topic, perhaps just going around the circle and having everyone say one word about how he/she feels about group facilitation, or having everyone close their eyes and shout something out at the same time about group facilitation
- This year’s training should include:
  - Trouble shooting: discipline, how to deal with passive aggressive tension, authority issues
  - Focusing on being a facilitator vs. a leader, how to use facilitating skills to work with group dynamics, ex. How to work with your peers
  - Conceptualizing participants not as participants, what it means to facilitate your peers, how leader participation actually works, what to do if your participants undermine your power
  - How to work with different personality styles, not just interaction between leadership styles
  - How to validate and address criticisms without making it a huge deal
  - How to let participants take on leadership without taking power away from the leaders
  - Actual case studies! (instead of doing them on the training trip) along with that... Having a leader trainer there to explain what happened on their bolt trip, this could be more effective than case studies
  - Work with personal experience, have leaders in training discuss personal challenges as leaders
  - Group dynamics in general... what’s needed in leaders? What roles are played? How roles change throughout the week, how leaders and participants and the group change
  - More specific, concrete ways to group facilitate like Dean Rose’s speech on what to do when someone is talking too much in a group

### Co-Leader Communication

- Structural Changes:
  - ADDITIONAL TRAINING: after co-leader pairing, discuss realities of a BOLT trip, having a tangible understanding of what your problems might be
  - More actual experiential things for the co-leaders to do together
  - Have co-leader teams meet before the fall trip
  - Emphasis on leader teams spending time together, especially if they didn’t request each other

- Concrete, written down: strengths, weaknesses, what you want in a co-leader, etc.
- Make it more clear: suggest who you want to be with!
- Confidential evaluations?
- Choosing leader pairings:
  - Actual process: what should be the deciding factors? How do you make leaders feel comfortable saying NO??? co-leader chemistry, if you don't have it, how do you handle it?
  - Should it be based on chemistry, not necessarily skill level?
  - Similar leadership styles being put together was frustrating
  - Leader cohesion: pairs and triples provide for different challenges... should be considered when choosing the leader teams
- This year's training should include:
  - How should leader conferences be handled? What the consequences of certain methods are
  - Emphasis on honest and open communication
  - How to cope with working outside your comfort zones, because it will happen

## LNT

- Critique of last year's training:
  - Some stations were more important than others, ex. Everyone respects wildlife, planning ahead and durable surfaces should be focused on more...But does that undermine the importance of certain topics?
- Suggestions:
  - How do we present it? Perhaps making it more informative, i.e., not just a wildlife web, but telling people about wildlife
  - LNT specifics! Talking about the issues in a more dynamic way... ecology, etc. needs more of an emphasis and can be taught to others
  - But where are we leaving no trace? More info about the white mountains, etc.
  - What would you do if? Specific scenarios, then have a debate about it, more stimulating, also, debate is necessary! that way people who think it's bullshit can get around the tough parts
  - Transfer LNT from the woods back to Brown, why is it important to live LNT at brown?
  - Presenting LNT in terms of ideas and the bigger picture, fluid concept!
  - How does LNT affect lifestyle choices (vegetarianism, what kinds of foods you buy, etc.)
  - Have leader teams discuss prior to the trip how LNT will be carried out on the trip with the participants

## **Year Round Program**

- Issues:
  - How do we continue the program during the Spring for those who weren't chosen to be leaders?
  - Do we want it to be a year round program?
  - How do we increase attendance?
  - How can we create more relationships between groups?
- Suggestions:
  - Open up the program to anyone interested at Brown (listserve)
  - Hold big events in the Spring (ex. Lock-in, etc.)

## **Other goodies...**

### Freshman Spring Meeting:

- Set the stage with a brief explanation of what BOLT is (core values, leadership, etc.), then break into small groups to discuss
- Emphasize leadership doesn't mean technical skill or bossiness
- Have activities on leadership (north, south, east, west) instead of just initiatives
- Talk about objectives for the trip
- Have participants write a letter to themselves before the trip, open and evaluate after the trip (letter can also be written during fall pre-training)

### SOLOs and Other Reflection Activities

- SOLO sits, giving each participant a journal (Ally, Taylor, and Dave's group)
- SOLO sits vs. SOLO hikes
- Have a question or quote for everyone to ponder during their SOLO
- Have a question or quote of the day
- Designated quiet times on the trail (Sonya and Erica's group)
- Make people reflect on the trip before filling out evals on the bus, invoke inflection during the trip (maybe writing journal entries, etc.)